



# Brewer Park

## WORKSHOP #2 MEETING REPORT July 14th, 2005

*Workshop time: 6:30 to 8:00pm*

*Workshop location: Sheldon Community Center, 2445 Willakenzie, Eugene*

*Workshop facilitator: Robin Hostick*

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### BACKGROUND

City of Eugene Parks & Open Space Planning staff hosted the second of two neighborhood workshops to discuss upcoming improvements to Brewer Park. The 1.9-acre park site was purchased in 1973, and in 1981 was improved with basic amenities, including concrete pathways, trees, lawn, benches, and a children's playground. Current improvements to the park are funded by the 1998 Parks and Open Space bond measure. The workshop included a review of the results of the previous workshop, brief discussion of the site, and a thorough explanation of the draft concept design. This was followed by a general, informal discussion of the draft concept design. Goals for the evening included 1) sharing results of the previous workshop and; 2) gathering comments about the draft concept design. About 14 neighbors attended the workshop.

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### ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement for workshop #2 included the following:

- A postcard invitation was mailed on July 5<sup>th</sup> to about 825 Cal Young Neighborhood residents within approximately 1/2 mile of the park
- Personal postcard invitations were mailed to other interested parties and stakeholders, including neighborhood leaders
- An article on the event was included in the June 30th issue of the Council Newsletter
- A news release was distributed on June 28th
- The workshop was included on the Parks and Open Space online schedule of events, and the City Manager's Office calendar of public meetings.
- The workshop was announced in the City/Region section of the Register Guard preceding the event

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### PRESENTATION

Meeting participants convened at the Sheldon Community Center green room. A slide presentation was delivered, covering an overview of park projects in the Cal Young neighborhood, funding sources, process and time line for Brewer improvements, and a review of the previous

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workshop results, including specific desires for improvements and related issues.

The draft concept design was presented and described in detail. Proposed improvements include reconstruction of the children's playground in the location of the existing playground; the addition of a small sand/water play area to the west of the main entry path, across from the reconstructed playground; a picnic area (two tables, one accessible) located adjacent to the playground and basketball court; new park furniture incl. benches, drinking fountain, trash receptacles, bike racks, entry sign, rules sign, and lights (which need to be added to the plan); shrub areas buffering the park from Brewer Ave. incl. native plants and trees, as well as a split rail fence; a small, 5' high mound dubbed "Brewer Hill" to the west of the play area; an additional "short hoop" bump out on the basketball court for smaller children's basketball play; a curb extension into Brewer Ave. to reduce traffic speed and eliminate tractor/trailer parking opportunities; a van-accessible parking space on Brewer Ave.; a bench location at the south end of the park; additional trees; irrigation of a portion of the park surrounding the play areas and extending into the open area to the south of the basketball court.

The staff recommendation for minimum Phase I improvements was stated to include the playground renovation and basic park furniture only. It was explained that the budget for the project, approximately \$75,000 available for construction, was in fact inadequate to cover this basic recommendation, and that staff would work on finding additional funding. Future funding would be required to construct the remaining improvements, and were most likely to become available through a future bond measure.

## **DISCUSSION**

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An informal and productive discussion of the draft concept design was held. All participants had an opportunity to share ideas and comments. Participants were asked share thoughts about the proposals, priorities, etc. A list is provided following this summary showing individual participant comments.

Generally, there appeared to be clear support for the proposals outlined in the draft concept design. Workshop participants supported both the type and configuration of improvements. Lights need to be added to the concept design prior to adoption so they may be added in the future, as well as a description of the proposed turf renovation and irrigation.

Participants were not surprised, although disappointed, with the results of the cost analysis, and urged staff to find the necessary funding to completed Phase I (as described above). Support was also voiced for the addition of shrub areas, if budgeted allowed, but acknowledged that a safe playground was a higher funding priority. The construction budgeted of \$75,000 was described as approximately \$40,000 short of the funds needed to reconstruct the playground and basic park amenities, based on current costs.

Questions were raised about 1) why the allocated budget for the project was so low; 2) why the construction costs are so high, and; 3) why the project is one of the last to be constructed out of the many 1998 POS bond park projects.

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In answer to the first question, it was explained that the budgets for each of the 18 neighborhood park projects were allocated prior to the formulation of the bond package in 1997, partly by staff recommendation and partly by decision of the POS bond committee. For the preceding 20 years or so, little funding was available for major park construction, and cost data reflected leveraging construction activities through in-house (City staff) resources, and smaller construction contracts.

Regarding the second question, construction costs have risen steeply in the past 18 – 24 months due to a range of factors, presumably including fuel prices, steel cost, concrete supply and demand (due to large freeway/bridge projects), and significant Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI) wage rate increases. Today's construction environment is also more costly due to increased regulation and the volume of projects. Additionally, gradual inflation has added significant cost since the passage of the bond 7 years ago.

Responding to the timing question, Brewer Park was scheduled to follow other parks that were determined to have more urgent need of improvements, including a number of parks that had been in City ownership, unimproved, for several decades; parks serving areas of town that are currently un-served by parks; and parks with immediate safety or social priorities. Brewer Park will be constructed concurrently with several other bond projects.

Much discussion was held around opportunities for the neighborhood to participate in the project by volunteering or fundraising. It was explained that the likelihood of successful grant applications, which was one proposal forwarded by participants, would be much higher if the application were submitted by a not-for-profit organization with a proven track record. Volunteer opportunities exist, and there are two City programs that could assist the neighbors to leverage funds this way: Neighbor Woods (Rick Olkowski), and Volunteers In Parks (Matt McRae).

A volunteer tree planting project was suggested as one option. Without automatic irrigation, which would not likely be covered by the Phase I budget, neighbors would need to arrange some kind of agreement to water the trees during the 3-year establishment period. Staff agreed to investigate the possibility of providing a water source on site to support this. It was explained that a committed work party of 10 or 12 would be needed for the project.

A discussion of other funding options was held, and it was explained that a staff discussion would have to take place to identify other potential funds that could potentially be added to the project. The basic Phase I was presented as the staff recommendation that would be the target funding level. The results of the discussion would be reported to workshop participants and posted on the web as soon as possible.

The outcome of the conversation with transportation planners was described, wherein the possibility of a crosswalk was eliminated due to a range of transportation issues and physical barriers. Neighbors emphasized that a crossing of some sort was still needed along Brewer, perhaps at another location. Contact information was provided for Rob Inerfeld, transportation planner, to work with the neighborhood in pursuing other transportation related issues such as traffic calming.

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It was explained that the curb extension would be planted to discourage street crossing at that location, and a new curb ramp at the ADA parking space would be added to facilitate access to the existing sidewalk. Maintenance access would need to be facilitated through the curb extension via “grass pave” or other product that supports vehicular traffic but allows growth of grass, or possibly through some other design solution.

The following is a general list of comments and ideas presented by participants during the workshop.

## ISSUES

### *Traffic and Parking*

- Still need safe crossing on Brewer somewhere E. of park
- Place traffic calming at NW corner of park?
- Add a single bollard at the south entrance (Margaret) to deter drivers from cutting through park on path
- Can something be done to deter drivers from entering park in the interim (prior to addition of split rail fence and shrub areas)?

## IDEAS

### *Facilities/Design*

- Add electrical outlet somewhere near the basketball court to facilitate neighborhood gatherings in this area (i.e. movie nights, etc.)
- Make the short basketball hoop extendable if possible
- Prefer low shrubs in parking strip areas as opposed to grass (although maintenance access needs to be allowed)
- Neighborhood interest in volunteer tree-planting project
- Get rid of Eugene Mission collection box (did someone approve this?)

## **FINDINGS**

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The level of response and viewpoints offered at the workshop suggest a reasonable representation of the neighborhood. The participant group appeared to express strong support for the plan, and stated that it met their needs and desires, with modifications as noted herein. Based on this feedback, staff will pursue the implementation of the plan and consider the formal design process concluded, with the exception of following up with workshop participants via letter regarding the outcome of budget discussions, and presenting the design at the October Cal Young Neighborhood Association meeting for general information. Follow up conversations will be held with members of the participant group regarding volunteer opportunities and future artwork installations.

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## **CLOSING**

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Participants were reminded that an update letter will be sent out regarding the outcome of budget discussions, and that construction is currently scheduled for summer of 2006. Participants or other interested parties are welcome to discuss the project or submit comments at any time via phone, email or delivered mail.

## **ATTENDEES:**

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The following parties attended the workshop:

William E. Sargent  
Lori Gannon  
Barbara L. Gunn  
Eric & Keb Wold  
Brinda Narayan Wold  
Terry Dafby  
Susanne & Clifford Fountain  
Yuri Samer  
Robin Holt  
Gary Pape  
Rebecca Mannheimer  
A. Nyitray

## **COMMENTS SHEETS**

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The following comments were recorded on comment sheets provided at the workshop and turned in to City staff at the end of the event.

Total comment sheets handed in at meeting: 4

1. *Do you feel the proposed concept plan fulfills the needs of the neighborhood? Why or why not?*
  - Basically, yes. Lack of meaningful budget
  - Yes, it appears that all of input from the previous workshop was incorporated into the design plan presentation
  - Fairly well w/both Phase I and Phase II
  - Yes, I believe the entire proposal needs to be constructed. If insufficient resources are all that is available, then Phase I is a minimum that should be considered.
  - The proposed plan for Brewer park is beautiful. Robin did an exquisite job incorporating community needs into the design. Phase I is very important for our parks and our neighborhood.

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- Phase I is vital to Brewer park. For safety concerns and to vitalize the neighborhood.
  - We need Phase I please, as a priority.
  - Yes, the full concept plan meets the needs. It incorporated the community's input. We need all of Phase I constructed in summer 2006.
  - Yes – I think they are exactly what is needed for the area.
2. *Are there any important park features missing from the proposed concept plan?*
- Significant traffic calming at NW corner; crosswalk for youth @ NE corner; anti-vehicle bollard @ Margaret sidewalk entrance
  - Not that I could see
  - Prevention of vehicles from driving through from Margaret to Brewer or Brewer to Margaret (like some posts @ Margaret)
  - W/Robin's design, nothing is missing except money allocated for Phase I and Phase II
  - Many features that are not included in Phase I. 1) Trees; 2) artwork; 3) lighting
  - We really like Phase I
  - No
  - Phase I is the absolute minimum that the neighborhood needs
3. *What is the MOST IMPORTANT park feature (that should be included no matter what)? List at least three of your highest priorities, in order of importance (1=most important).*
- Rebuild/remodel playground area
  - Landscape/architectural thwart drive-in vandals
  - Turf rebuild/lawn upkeep (I am a neighbor fighting massive weed infestation all the time)
  - Safe playground equipment; 2) lighting; 3) landscaping – need to get Phase I done ASAP
  - Phase I w/safety
  - Rebuild the playground area with safety of the children in mind
  - Play features; art; trees; hill; native plants
  - An improved play structure area; picnic tables and benches; a safe, well-designed play area for the neighborhood children.
  - Immediately construct Phase I
  - Play ground; picnic area; extra benches
  - replacement & expansion of playground area, including short basketball hoop; 2) planting new trees for shade in various places; 3) "Brewer Hill" & sand & water play area
  - new playground equipment that is updated and safe

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4. *What park features are LEAST IMPORTANT? List at least three of your lowest priorities, in order of importance (1=least important).*
- Mini basketball hoop; 2) sand and water play
  - curb extension on Brewer St.; 2) Yes, planting new trees 6-10; 3) new trees & shrubs in SW corner of park
  - Brewer Mound; 2) sand & water play for tots; 3) Leave horseshoe court
  - It's all important
  - It is all important
  - Earth mound; extra trees
  - reconfiguring curbs; 2) sand/water tot area; 3) light posts
5. *Would you be interested in participating in a volunteer effort related to the park? What type? (Some possibilities might be tree and shrub planting and care, trail building, care of natural areas, park patrol, etc.)*
- Yes – tree planting & watering
  - Yes, planting new trees 6-10
  - Yes – tree planting; tree watering; help w/art etc.
  - Yes – tree planting and care
  - Yes – plantings, grant writing, maintenance
  - Fund raising?
  - Been patrolling park along w/others for years already
6. *Any other comments?*
- We really need a functional neighborhood park to help unite the area. Revitalizing of the area is essential. The proposal is great and is the minimum of what is needed.
  - We really need all of Phase I constructed in summer 2006
  - Robin has done a good job – thanks
  - Sorry to hear that we don't have more funding – our park is important to us, and we would like to see it improved fully
  - The phase I & II of this park are vital for neighborhood continuity and livability
  - Disappointing that even basic renovation will cost more than current available funding
  - Coming to the neighborhood several years after petitions were presented to City to increase public safety aspects of the park with a “wonderful” concept plan that (a) does not address those petitioned concerns for several more years, and (b) does not have the funds to complete the playground Phase I might be seen as an exercise of cynical politics rather than really genuinely responding to a neighborhood.